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Subject: The Glory of Jehovah.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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# THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH.

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“And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”—Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19.

“And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third, and to the fourth generation.”—Ex. xxxiv., 5-7.

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MOSES was the one great man of antiquity. Although there is an element of venerableness in the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—they stand in our imagination rather as great frescoes. They are types of certain natures; but they said and did little which was worth recording. Though they were great men in their times, judged by the standards of those times, they have left as a legacy very little. But Moses, as a thinker, a legislator, a poet and an administrator, was great, not only as measured by his own age, but as measured by any age. His institutes are not worn out. Aside from that wonderful people who have based their whole economy upon the Mosaic Institutes, the spirit of the Mosaic economy has been breathed into universal civilization.

While it was given to other nations to develop the intellectual side of human nature, and the side of beauty, it was given to the Jew to develop the moral side. And from that economy which Moses himself founded, and for a long time administered, sprang influences which have changed and developed the civilization of the whole globe.

Moses began his public career at a time when most men are ready to die, or are very old; for he was eighty years of age when he undertook to lead the people forth from Egypt. For forty years, beginning at eighty, he administered national affairs, leading that people through the desert, and to the borders of the promised land.



And it is said that when he died his eye was not dimmed nor his natural force abated. In recounting the great worthies of the then antiquity, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions, of course, Moses, and speaks of him in a manner which implies that he was one who had lived under a tremendous burden, and declares that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." In other words, he declares that the inspiration and support of his wonderful life was the conscious presence, and his knowledge, of God.

It becomes, therefore, a matter of more than curiosity, a matter of profound interest to us, to know what that view of God was, what those fundamental ideas of the divine nature were, which Moses received, which sustained him, which inspired him, and which unquestionably laid the foundation of those institutes and that administration which have made his name and nation so famous. This view is contained in our text.

The people had been carried out of Egypt. They had gathered themselves around the base of Sinai. And Moses was seized, as well he might have been, with a profound feeling of discouragement and dread. He had these millions on his hands. There was nowhere on earth that he could look for succor. So he turned himself to God. And we may well believe that in the anguish of his soul he besought God to help him.

"Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now, therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; and consider that this nation is thy people."

To this God replied,

"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

And Moses said,

"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."

The Lord again responded, saying unto Moses,

"I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name."

And Moses said,

"I beseech thee, show me thy glory?"

And the Lord said,

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

And so, after some preliminary observations and prescriptions,

"The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord."

In other words, as Moses had asked that he might see God's glory, God replied that he should see his *goodness*, as if that was the equivalent of his glory.

Moses was about to lead this great people up from comparative barbarism to civilization; but he wanted some view of God upon which he could stand, and from which he could legislate. He wanted to frame laws and institutions that should go down to remote generations, and he desired, therefore, to have the starting-point of all this work founded in the highest and truest knowledge of God. He desired to see God from that stand-point which would make him a wise legislator, a wise judge, and a wise leader. And he said, "What are those views, O my God, by which I shall shape my whole course and administration, and upon which I shall educate this great people? Show them to me now." He asked the charter, as it were, of divine character. He asked that God would reveal himself in those elementary principles of constitution and law which should be the right foundation on which to build the whole superstructure of the economy that was to stand for ages. And it was in answer to this practical demand that this view was given by God of his own nature.

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, [Jehovah] the Lord God [Jehovah], merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

You will observe that in this declaration made for the specific purpose of practical use in the highest offices of the highest life, the very center and substance of the representation is, that God is a God of goodness, through goodness is not to be understood as implying the absence of punitive administration. It is not an administration which excludes pain and severity, if they be needful.

Consider, in reading this description of the divine nature given by God himself to his servant of old, that, in the first place, there is an omission of what are called *the natural attributes of God*. There is nothing said of his creative power. There is nothing said of his sustaining power. There is nothing said of his power at any rate. There is nothing said of his wisdom. There is nothing said of what we are accustomed to call God's omnipotence, his omniscience, or his omnipresence. Not that they are not traits or attributes of God; but they are not the characteristic elements of the divine disposition. These are to the divine nature what the body, with its health, its strength, its skill and its beauty, is to man. They are not unimportant. Every man appreciates what it is to have a good personal

presence, and to have\* bodily power and vigor. But as civilization develops mankind, without disesteeming physical qualities we learn to put emphasis upon character and disposition. In savage life, he is the greatest man who can lift the most, or hurl the weight farthest, or contend most successfully in battle. In other words, physical strength is the ideal of manhood.

But as civilization goes on, we transfer skill from mere muscular development to mental capacity or power, whether it be in commerce or politics, or any other sphere of the intellect.

And as civilization still develops, we rise higher, and then man's worth resides, not in his bodily conditions nor in his physical skill, nor in his intellectual power, but in his inward character and disposition.

We have, then, in ourselves, an analogy or intimation of that which appears in this declaration of Jehovah to his servant Moses, where, passing by, as it were, all the incidentals—the elements of mere power or intellect, or wisdom—he asserts that his divinity resides in the central element of goodness. When asked to make his glory manifest, he says, "I will show you my goodness," as much as to say that his goodness was his glory.

If you analyze this disposition upon which God places emphasis as most eminent and characteristic, you will see how it still hangs around about that one center; how it lingers and repeats itself in every various form. As a sweet phrase in music, under Beethoven's hand, forever changed, and yet forever came back again to the theme, so you will find here that this one central notion of divine goodness, changing and altering, never is lost, but continually, from beginning to end, is made to reappear.

"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth [what we mean by fidelity], keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

This undertone is just as necessary to our conception of divine goodness as is the idea that all responsibility and all penalty are not malign, either by accident or by intent, but are the applications of goodness itself.

God's long suffering, his patience, his fidelity to men, his leniency, his forgiving disposition, which goes on and on and on, must not be interpreted into moral laxity and indifference. It is the goodness of One who prefers, with infinite preference, that which is holy, and just, and pure, and good. It is the goodness of One that will not leave untried all appropriate influences to maintain, to increase, and finally to make victorious that which is resplendent in purity and



ineffable in goodness, though he "will by no means clear the guilty."

God is not good in any such sense as that he is weakly indulgent. He desires happiness in men; but he desires to promote happiness in them by making them susceptible to happiness—by developing them so that they shall be able to be happy.

This conception of God, as a vindicator of Law, is what experience teaches, and what Providence has taught. If there be one thing which nature teaches more clearly than another, it is the doctrine of penalty; that is to say, the doctrine that disobedience of law brings suffering. And at the same time nature also teaches that obedience of law brings healing and forgiveness. It has been believed that nature taught nothing except that the man who sins shall die; but nature does give a hint of something more than this. He who, disregarding the laws of gravity, by springing over a precipice breaks his leg, certainly learns penalty; but if he goes home and has his leg set and put in splints, and the bones knit together and acquire new strength, he learns remedy and forgiveness. When a man is sick he is taught that there is penalty for transgression; and when he gets well he is taught that there is mercy for transgressors. Resiliency and recuperation are indications of mercy, as much as suffering and pain are indications of justice, on the part of God. Nature teaches penalty; and in an obscure way it also teaches remedy. Providence likewise teaches penalty and remedy. And the great experiences of mankind have shaped themselves into the universal feeling that to do right is in the main to court happiness, and that to do wrong is in the main to court unhappiness.

Men feel, also, that penalty, as well as remedy, is an instrument of benevolence. And there are those who blame their neighbors for making too little use of penalty. There are those who pride themselves upon not being too lenient. "I love my children too well to indulge them in things that are not for their good," says many a parent. We look upon the children of others that have been spoiled by indulgence, and say, "Weak mother, to let her children do as they please, because she is fond of them! Foolish parents, to give their children pleasure to-day, which will deprive them of pleasure to-morrow!" We say of stern parents, "They are very severe; but see how their children are turning out." The result determines the wisdom of the course pursued; and if under an administration of sternness children turn out well, we cannot but praise that sternness, because it proves itself in the end to be kindness. Nothing can be more really kind than the infliction of suffering for the sake of making joy more abundant in the future.

Therefore, this declaration, which was coupled with the description of the divine nature at this very early period, is one which runs with human experience and observation, and belongs to our sense of that which is right and true—the declaration of goodness seeking goodness, and doing it, too, wherever necessary, at the expense of suffering, or by the use of pain.

But the central point is this: is there a Divinity that uses pain for the sake of pain? Is there a government over this universe in which there is suffering without any other end than suffering? Can there be any better definition given of malignity than that it is a voluntary administration of suffering merely for the sake of suffering? The question which every man wants solved for himself, just as much as Moses did, is, What is the center from which penalty springs? Does it come from passion, does it come from wrath, does it come from wounded self-esteem, in any super-eminent power? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see in the lower forms of life where men are in contact with material things? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see when men have risen into their social relationships? What is the origin of the pain and the penalty which we see at large in society, and which develop themselves on every hand? What is the controlling influence in which this strange quality of pain-bearing inheres?

There have been those who said that it belonged to a separate divinity—to a cruel and hating One that loved blood and suffering. But men could not accept that view, it seemed so contrary even to their low and crude ideas of love.

There have been others who joined pleasure and pain in one administration, and taught that the divine character was one which, when we were reconciled to it, was full of goodness and mercy, but which, when we were unreconciled to it, was full of wrath and hatred and pain-loving. Yea, it has been taught that “for the sake of his own glory” God created pain, and stamped it with immortality. It is stated in that ancient formula of faith, the Westminster Confession, that “not with foresight of good or evil, not on account of any supposed misconduct, but for purposes of his own free-will and glory,” God did create a race, large portions of which, not being elected, would go on to eternal punishment, suffering forever and forever remedilessly—and all “for his own glory”!

Now, when Moses asked of God that he would show him his glory, he said, “I will make my goodness pass before you,” thus declaring that his goodness was his glory. And when all things were arranged, and Moses went up into the mountain as he had been com-



manded to do, the Lord descended and proclaimed the name of the Lord; and then he went on to declare what the divine elements were, saying,

"Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

This one little qualifying phrase, *and will by no means clear the guilty*, was all that he said on that side. But look at the amplitude, the repetition, the richness of description, the fullness, the tropical luxuriance, which were employed in evolving the idea that the central nature of the administration of God is one of mercy—and that, too, against men that transgress, imperfect men, undeveloped men, sinning men, wicked men, bad men. It would seem as if it were meant to imply that there was depth after depth of mercy in the divine administration, that there was forgiveness for sins of every kind and degree, and that through long eras he manifested his patience toward the transgressor. He made the declaration full and large. But lest men should say, "There is no danger in sinning; if I transgress I shall be forgiven," he, as it were, says, "Ah! do not think that you can escape. I will not forgive finally the unregenerate. I will administer goodness for the sake of reclaiming the wicked, and I will exercise patience toward them; but rather than give them over, I will apply pain and penalty to them."

And here we see the declaration of that great law of inheritance of which so much is made in our day, and which was disclosed under the Mosaic dispensation ages and ages before it was disclosed by what we see in modern philosophy. That the iniquity of parents is visited upon their children from generation to generation, we know. We know that the drunkard's child is apt to be a drunkard. We know that the child of an insane person is apt to be insane. We know that the constitutional peculiarities of father and mother are apt to show themselves in their offspring. We know that the perversities of a man's heart are likely to go down to his children. We know that the sins of one generation sometimes entail their evil consequences upon the four or five generations which follow them. We know that these things are a part of the economy of the whole universe, so far as we have been able to observe it.

But you will observe that the emphasis of the divine character lies in the direction of goodness, and that the qualifying phrase, the alternative, limiting notion is that of penal justice, which is interpreted and directed by this great central element. It is a justice which seeks to make men just. It is pain-bearing for the sake of taking away pain. It is remedial infliction. It is penalty tempered with love. We have the declaration of God that all the wide sweep

of pain and penalty which we see in society is simply a part of the economy of divine goodness. It springs from that center. It originates in a goodness which produces pain only where the production of pain tends to produce happiness by and by. The divine character is represented as being an orb of bright, glowing, glorious goodness in all its forms and developments; and yet it is capable of producing pain wherever pain may be necessary to the well-being of those under its administration. And this was the interior view which mankind needed.

Let us recur to the fact that Moses asked for a view of God on which he should found his administration. "Give me," said he, "that view of thyself and thy nature and thine administration that shall enable me to govern these people aright. I am to make laws; I am to frame institutions; I am to administer justice between man and man; I am to give men the word of instruction in respect to their households; and let me come back to the Fountain of truth and knowledge. What art thou, oh my God? Teach me thyself, and then I shall be able to teach this people."

Thus solicited, God gave this representation of his character: that it was chiefly a character of love and mercy. But to this representation was added the fact that this love and this mercy would arm themselves with penalties sufficient to exterminate evil and to promote good.

It was this that Moses took as the basis of his administration. And it would be a matter of great interest to show, what might be shown—that Moses' administration, founded on that central notion which he derived from God's nature and character, branched out into statutes of humanity which marked it from all contemporaneous governments.

There is one other part of this passage which I have not emphasized. When Moses besought God that he would show him his glory, God said,

"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee."

And then he added,

"I will be gracious on whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

There is, to me, great significance in that declaration of personal liberty on the part of God. Not only is this fact very significant, but it is very needful in our time. For there are but few men who have a God that has any liberty. If you ask natural science to-day what God's functions are, it will tell you that he has, as an Artificer, invented and set a-going a vast machine, and that his particular business now is to oil the wheels of that machine, and watch the

operation of it. When I ask a man to pray, men sneer and laugh, and say, "Do you suppose that God is going to stop turning the wheels of the universe, and is going to change the action of his laws, to accommodate any man, or any number of men? Not a bit of it. If you want anything, you must do exactly what other people have to do. God is grinding all the time, and those that help themselves will have such elements as are being supplied at his mill; but that great machine is not going to be stopped to put in any little elements different from these, which this or that man may want or ask for. God is a great mill-grinder, and he stands grinding out by natural laws those things which it is designed that men shall have, and no one can have anything except that which comes to everybody." When I plead for the inspiration of God's wisdom, men say, "Do you suppose God is going to hear you, and give you a gift of special inspiration? It cannot be done. Nature is immutable." Nowadays philosophers are talking about the immutability of great natural laws, and laughing to scorn our theologies and teachings in regard to the power of God to answer the prayers of his people. They say, "God has arranged everything, and he governs by laws, and he cannot change those laws, and therefore he cannot grant special favors."

Well, what is God? These philosophers cannot tell. "He is something in the nature of laws," they say. All that philosophy knows about him is law, law, law! There are some who have come so near to the true definition of God that they are now willing to admit that these laws are the result of force; and they talk about the great Force of the universe. They are fashioning a new name for God, on the same principle that our name was formed. For *God* is a contraction of the word *good*; and our God is *Goodness*—a name derived from the great central characteristics of the divine character. Modern philosophy is dispossessing us of that name, and is putting Power in the place of it. And God is going to be Power—that is to say, a Power which, having made this great machine originally, keeps it running, and tinkers it occasionally when it gets out of repair, but which cannot do anything further than that. It is not once thought by these philosophers that the Power which created laws can stand outside of them, or above them, and give new functions to them, or produce unexpected results by them. They ridicule men who have faith that they can procure special blessings by asking God for them. They say, "If you want anything of God, ask what natural laws are, and use them; and if you are strong enough to get what you want, you will get it, and if you are not strong enough, you will not get it."



Practically the personality of God is taken away, and he is left a pigmy of the universe, once powerful to create, but now powerless to control anything that he has created. It is a peculiarity of the insect species, that when once the fly has made provision for its offspring, it dies; and according to the representations of these modern philosophers, God is a sort of exiguous fly, and having provided the seed for events, and having set the forces of nature in motion, has nothing more to do. The substance of their teaching is, that being omnipotent and all-wise, God marked out the course of events, and that, having by his creating power established the foundation of things, having, as it were, prepared the great universe, there is nothing more that he can do, except to keep on rolling and rolling the wheels of the vast apparatus which he has brought into existence, with power to keep it a-going, but without power to stop it, or to use it, or to change it, or to modify it in any way.

Therefore there is great significance in that declaration which God makes of himself, where, having proclaimed himself to be a God of goodness, he instantly proceeds to declare his personal independence, his individual freedom, the untrammelled power of his will, saying,

*"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."*

This is a declaration that God had a right to be gracious to the Egyptians as well as to the Israelites; or to the nations of the Orient, as well as to the nations of the Occident. It is an announcement of God's right to show mercy in the divine administration to nations of different tongues; it is a declaration of personal liberty. This liberty of God to act according to his will inheres in the central element of the divine nature. And to-day, undiminished in juice and freshness, is this declaration of God, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy."

In other words, he says, "I am not chained. I am not absorbed in the machinery of the universe. I have liberty to think as I please. I have liberty to use the laws which I have created, or to set them aside. I have liberty to administer outside of them, or through them, or over them, or under them." God is greater than his laws. He is not tied up by them. He can act independent of them.

Men say, "A miracle cannot be." Ah, but why can it not be? If there was a power which made fire to burn, and water to quench fire, cannot that same power, still existing, change these elements so that water shall burn, and fire shall quench water? Is not the power that is competent to create a quality, also competent to change

that quality? The question is not whether it prefers to change it, but whether the power is not there.

Men say, "God administers only according to great natural laws." How do you know?

The trouble with science is, that it teaches of God simply what it perceives of the administration of God in material things, or in what it calls *nature*. It assumes that nature consists of matter. But I hold that the very capital of nature is the human soul, and that the administration of the divine economy in respect to rocks, soils, light, water, electricity, heat, or what not, is mere nest-building. And as a bird is better than the nest in which it is hatched, so man is better than the world in which he was created, and which was created for him.

Now, if you take the human soul as a part of nature; if you take the facts which human experience develops as belonging to the realm of nature; if you take human character as the result of the action of the forces in nature, nothing is more taught than personal liberty, and the power of varying natural laws. I can vary the fruitfulness of natural laws. I can make an acre of land barren as a desert, or I can make it bring me in a hundred bushels of corn. And how can I do it? By using natural laws. Men declare that natural laws are infrangible, invincible, and beyond the control of God himself; and yet they are subject to changeable use by even the human will. I can make the world a wilderness, or I can transform it into a garden; I can pile up machinery, or I can tear it down; I can build cities, or I can destroy them; I can create, or I can annihilate; I can find out electricity, and make it do my bidding; by means of the electric wire I can make the world bustle with activity; I can impregnate natural laws with vitality from my own brain; I can, by my personal energy, produce high civilization—this is but another form of telling what human nature has done—I can do all these things, acting through natural laws; and yet men will sturdily say that God, infinite and transcendent, cannot do anything with these laws. They teach us that God is pent up by natural laws which he has organized, that he is harnessed to them, and that he is forever pulling in one direction, unable to change his course—in other words, that he is a mere locomotive on an iron track, and can neither turn to the right nor to the left.

This is a base conception; and it is falsified by your experience and by mine. You and I are a part of nature, and the best part of it. Man is the cream, and the rest is milk.

Consider the understanding and the social affections; consider what a man is in relation to the material world and to his fellow-

men; consider what we can do; and then consider how much more transcendent God is than we are in goodness, and in power, and in wisdom, and in all those qualities which raise us above the condition of the brute, and you will see that all such limitations of the divine nature are preposterous and absurd.

This liberty of God to use the world as I use it; his liberty to change the world as he pleases, according to the good of all his creatures—this great liberty, asserted far back in the time of Moses, needs to be emphasized again and again and again, and particularly in these days when there are so many superficial teachings and thinkings which lead one to suppose that there is no God except science, and that there is nothing in science but fixed natural laws, —a belief which amounts to absolute atheism, the dreariest and most death-like.

But this idea of the liberty of God has another application beside that which is made to science. It has an application to theology. I am oftentimes asked, "Why do not you preach the atonement of Christ more?" I preach the *nature* of Christ. I preach his life and his teachings. I declare my faith that he was God manifest in the flesh. Although the fullness of the divine nature was circumscribed, was not made manifest, was held back by the obstruction of the flesh; yet so much as we see of it I claim to be the real representation of the action of the divine thought and feeling. I preach Christ, personal. I preach his love, his patience, his forgiveness, his power upon the human soul. I preach him as the Author and the Finisher of the faith of every soul that is to be saved. I set him forth in every conceivable way. I preach Christ to the understanding, to the conscience, to the social sympathies, to every side of human nature. I preach him so that he shall comfort, and inspire, and guide, and instruct, and be a power on and in the soul. And after all, men say, "You preach a good deal about the Lord Jesus Christ, but why do you not preach about his atonement?"

What is the atonement of Christ? Is there a Christ, and then an atonement outside of him which is a kind of fourth God? The atonement of Christ is Christ himself. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*—that is the atonement. It is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God, "Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," as declared in this Old Testament Scripture. It is the tendency of the divine, loving Soul to recuperate men who are sick—to draw back men who are sinning. Historically regarded, this power of the heart of God, this healing nature of the divine soul, was developed and maintained in the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not say that there are not passages in regard to the life and death



of Christ which hint at relations which he sustained to other parts of the great moral economy of the universe; but as they are simply hints, and are not explained, and are inexplicable, I let them alone, merely saying that there are such hints. But the only thing in regard to Christ that the New Testament does explain, is, that he loves all men, and that he will save all that will let him save them. And the atonement of Christ—of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world for mankind—is Love. The manifestation of it, the disclosure of it, was by his earthly life and death; but the thing itself is infinite and eternal, and is in the heart of Christ.

This does away, in a moment, with the old reasoning that God the Father could not forgive until some plan of atonement was arranged, and that he gave his Son to come and die in order that he might forgive. It takes away all that machinery of false philosophy, and presents the truth in its clarity and grandeur and reasonableness. It makes known the better doctrine that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is Goodness—a Goodness that will not suffer men to go wrong if it can by pain and penalty stop them—a Goodness that will forgive them if they find out their mistake and turn back. The “plan” of Atonement eternally existed in God’s own original nature. The central reason why God forgives is that he loves to do it.

Why did Howard make the circumnavigation of the globe, visiting the poor in prisons? Did he do it because he saw that so he might achieve for himself praise or glory? No; he did it, because that ever-springing sentiment of love in his soul which was but an emanation from God made it necessary to himself that he should do it. It was a feeling in him of undying pity and sorrow that led him to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and the needy. And every man on earth who is never weary of well-doing—of instructing the ignorant; of pardoning those that come short of duty; of letting his sympathy and help brace up those who are in the battle of life—every such man is in himself the spark, the analogue of that nature which is central in the Lord Jesus Christ. Benevolence, love, which administers for the good of men—that is God all over, from center to circumference, and from circumference back to center again. Goodness—a Goodness that will make men pure, and true, and happy—by smiles if it can, but if it cannot by smiles, then by frowns; and if not by frowns, then by pains—that is the nature of God. He works by pain as well as by pleasure; for pain is but the right hand of love, working for the recuperation of the sick. And so he fills the heaven with goodness, and is filling, little by little, the earth with goodness. He is putting down the wrong, and establishing

the right. He is lifting the race upward, and carrying them onward, by joy and by pain, by pleasure and by sorrow, by reason and by affection. By every means, he is striving to unfold the race, and bring them into the summer of divine life, where they, too, shall become free and powerful, because good.

It is this same freedom which God claims for himself when he says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy"—it is this same freedom which we call mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. Love, goodness, compassion, shown even at the price of pain—that is God's nature.

As these were the best views for Moses in his time, so they are the best views for men yet. The lower men are in the development of their faculties, the more you will be obliged to use motives addressed to their senses—the more you will be obliged to use motives that are of a coercive, force-bearing character. On the other hand, the higher men are, the more you can bring to bear upon them subtler, finer inducements to right and dissuasions from wrong. And the latter influences are the more effectual. Mere force is not sufficient to reclaim men. A malign God will never make a virtuous world. A stern and vengeful God will never make men afraid to sin, to any great extent. It certainly will not draw them back when they have fallen into sin.

The child has gone wrong, and the father's brow is clothed with wrath; his pride is wounded; his sense of right is outraged; and he comes down on the trembling child as the thunder-storm comes down on the tender herb: and the child braces himself up, and endures as best he can; but he is not reformed. On the contrary, he is driven off further and further. But when the father is gone, and the child lingers in the distance, and the mother hovers near him, she gently puts her arm about the child, and draws him tenderly aside, and with sweet voice speaks to him;—he breaks down, and in a torrent of sorrow pours out his confession into her bosom. Ah! it is the mother's heart that subdues him. The father's sternness could not do it. Justice could not do it. Hardness only drove him further away.

I do not deny that there is a place where there must be pain, and where there must be an administration of suffering; but I say that all administrations of suffering are void unless they are preceded and superseded by the recuperative and reformatory influences of goodness and love. You cannot make a household good unless you can love it into goodness. You cannot make a community good unless you can love it into goodness. You cannot make bad men good unless you can love them into goodness. I

do not think that it is in the power of penitentiaries to save men, as long as they are under the management of selfish, grasping office-holders. I do not think that one poor starveling chaplain can save from five to eight hundred men as long as the money which should be applied for their reformation and evangelization goes to reward politicians for their party service. I have no doubt that much of the mismanagement of our penitentiaries is the result of inexperience and weakness—that weakness which is meant when it is said that the law *was weak through the flesh*; but when I look at the way in which we deal with criminals, I feel that there is no other such humiliating and pity-inspiring spectacle of the meagerness of the soul of man in the great recuperative element of love, as is manifested in our attempts to restore to the way of virtue, men who have wandered into the path of vice.

There is only one place that the gate of heaven is but a hand's-breadth from; and that is the family. It is there that the father and mother make suffering for the sake of saving suffering. It is there that the parent bears the sins and sorrows of the child. It is there that the stripes are laid upon the parent's back by which the child's transgressions are healed. But outside of the household how wretched is the attempt of men to save their fellow-men! When a man has once done wrong, he is kicked down the street, and whispered about and hooted at, and can no more get back to honor and respectability than a gull can fly against a tornado. The wrong-doer is everywhere met with a spirit of revenge. On every side are the symbols of destruction. There is the flail, and there is the sword. There is also the cross—but it is the victim that hangs on the cross, and not the Substitute. And what we need more than anything else, in our laws, in our institutions, and in our public sentiment, for our cities, and towns, and villages, is this view of the character of God which ascribes to it goodness, mercy, gentleness, kindness. We have tried cruelty, and it has done little good; we have tried acerb and unflinching justice, and it has not been adequate to the emergency. We have tried views of God which put no intensity upon purity and goodness, and they have done good in some directions, and have done harm in other directions. What we want is a view of God which makes him, not one that does not care for sin, but one that does care for it, that hates it, that strives against it, and that sets his heart and all the enginery of the universe against it, not for the sake of tormenting men, but for the sake of saving them. We want a view of God which makes him one who uses pain as a remedy for evil, and who punishes men for their good. Looking through all the endless ages of eternity, there is no point where God can be



happy while he sits brooding upon immedicable pain. Somewhere let us hope the Universe will reach the glorious limit of suffering. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Every year, the sun, that strives all Summer with reluctant fruit, at length conquers and turns the acid to sugar.

But, like all other things it comes latest. The apples which keep through the Winter are those that do not ripen until November. Those that ripen in June perish by Autumn. The apples that are the longest lived and the most profitable, are the slowest in coming to ripeness. And let us hope that the long Summer in which such abundant fruits have been produced, and this Autumn in which such glorious hues have been evolved, shall not be sacrificed to mere benevolence. But may there be justice, fidelity, love, kindness, recuperation, long-suffering, patience, to the end, that men may at last be rounded up out of their mistakes and imperfections into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God.

And now, if you do not understand anything else about this sermon, I beg you to understand one thing—namely, as you go back to your homes to-day, and as you go to your business to-morrow, he will be most like God who knows how to exercise the most of benevolence with discretion. That is the practical application—more discreet benevolence; more long-suffering kindness; more fruitful gentleness; more patience for others, and less patience with yourself. You will be near to God, not by the frequency of the times that you pray in your closet, but by the amount of love that your heart is capable of generating, and by the amount of happiness which shall spring from your conception of the fidelity and the majesty of divine mercy.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, since we cannot find our way to thee, that thou art pleased to condescend unto us. Though we cannot understand thee, nor compass thy being, we do feel thy presence, and know something of thy power. And we rejoice to believe that we are beloved of thee; and that, though we are yet children afar off, we are under way toward that perfect knowledge and that perfected being whereby we shall see God, and know him even as we are known of him.

And now, as we grope in darkness, how much do we need the cheering revelation of thy presence to us! We need to feel thine hand, though we may not be able to trace it nor grasp it. It is a joy and a comfort to believe that thine hand is our best shield; that we are protected on every side; that therein are the resources of might which are for the support of our weakness; that there is vigilance in protection, and fidelity in love. All that we need as we move along the lines of our circumscribed being we find in thee. We live and move and have our being in thee. And though we cannot understand it; though our thoughts soon reach the bound and barrier, and all beyond is cold and darkness, we believe that justice and judgment are the habitations of thy throne, and that when we see thee as thou art, not only shall we be satisfied, but every power of our being will be stimulated, and we shall be lifted up to praise and to glorify thy name, and to rejoice in thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wilt grant some gleams of this knowledge to us even here. Grant that there may be hours in which the transfiguration shall take place again before our sight. Grant that we may have some discernment of the reality of the great spiritual realm where, that true life is of which this is but the symbol. And we pray that we may hear the voice that speaks to us, although it may be inaudible to our outward ear, and that we may feel the influence that comes forth from thee. As to them that are afar off the garden sends out invitation in all its sweetness and fragrance, so may there come wafted to us that are journeying off the shore of the heavenly land those sweet odors which shall tell us of that which we cannot see, that we may know that it is true, and that we may have firm conviction and joy of things that are invisible but real.

We pray for the forgiveness of our sins. Have compassion upon us, not according to our desert, nor according to our asking, nor according to our reforming power. Take the measure of thy bounty and goodness from thyself; and according to the multitude of thine own tender mercies have compassion upon us, and forgive us our transgressions, and heal our backslidings, and draw us more and more with the cords of love to thyself, and make us more and more susceptible of thine administration. May we not dwell where force must needs reach us. May we rise more and more into that higher realm where thou canst, by hope, and by love, and by all the inspiration of faith, guide us. Yea, by the beck of thine own eye, guide us. We beseech of thee, O Lord, that we may live as children in the presence of their parents, where to do their will is joy.

We pray that thou wilt grant unto us this day thy special presence, and administer to all according to their need, and according to thy greatness and goodness. We pray that thou wilt help those who are, under much discouragement, maintaining the battle of life against adverse circumstances, against evil dispositions, and against trials multifarious and long continued. We pray that they may endure to the end. And though often discomfited, may they never be defeated. Though cast down, may they never be destroyed, nor think themselves destroyed. Whatever may be the trouble, O let none call out as thou didst, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken*

me? May every one yet feel that there is an all-helping, all-loving, all-forgiving, never-forgetting Heart.

We beseech of thee, O Lord! that thou wilt grant that every one may feel that God is his strength, and will never leave him nor forsake him. And if there are any who are afar off, and are slowly and toilsomely ascending the steep way down which they have gone, amidst broken resolutions, amidst discouragements, amidst shame and mortified pride, amidst all environments and hindrances, may God be their strength and their exceeding great reward.

We pray that thou wilt be near to those who are oppressed by adverse circumstances; who are shut in on the right hand and on the left. We pray that thou wilt grant to them such rest that they may be content in the midst of thy providences. Whatever they are, may they not be discouraged from exertion. And yet, we pray that the rebound may not be perpetually jarring and dissatisfying them.

Oh! that men might learn to cast their care upon the Lord, who careth for them. Let us not be scared away from this trust by the consciousness of our unworthiness. If only they might put their burdens on thee who are worthy to do it, who could do it? Grant that we may have such faith in God's largeness and goodness that though we know that we are unworthy and sinful we may venture to put our care upon him, because he loves us and cares for us. And in respect to our children and our friends who are absent and scattered, whatever may be our anxiety and solicitude, grant that we may be able to ease ourselves in thy presence, and to know that the smile of God dissipates trouble even as the coming sun scatters the darkness of the night.

And we pray, O Lord! that we may never be weary in well-doing. May none that have girded themselves for thy service think it a vain thing that they have served the Lord. May none that have sown seed and waited long, yield to despondency, and withhold their hand. May none that have looked with eager hope and expectation for the fruit of their labor, and seen it not, be tempted to intermit, and go away, selfishly seeking after their own comfort. May thy servants go forth laboring in thy cause, workers together with God to the end of life, leaving with thee the issue. May they be faithful, steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know that their labor shall not be in vain.

And grant, we beseech of thee, that thy blessing may rest upon all those that are in thy presence this morning, children of sorrow. Wilt thou pour balm upon all wounded hearts.

May all those who reproach themselves with duties unfulfilled, and with kindnesses unrequited toward God and toward men, receive comfort. May those who are conscious of wrongs done to dear ones that have gone from them, and who are now beyond their reach, be consoled of thee. Be with those who mourn from wounds that will not be healed. Be a very present help in time of trouble to those who are in anguish of spirit by reason of their own short-comings. May they know that in thy presence is great joy and delight. Spread abroad thy wings over them; and in thee may they find that rest which they cannot find in themselves. Oh! that men would turn away from these broken cisterns—their own hearts—and find rest in God, the Refuge that never fails.

And we pray that thou wilt be near to those who in the midst of life's duties are bearing its burdens. Fulfill to them thy promise. May they come and learn of thee in meekness and humility that all burdens shall be light, and that all yokes shall be easy.

We pray for those who are growing infirm, and upon whose heads rest the snows of years. Will the Lord comfort them, and prepare them for that



change which is very near, and which, when it comes, shall be but passing from glory to glory.

We pray for all those who worship with us to-day, strangers in a strange place. May they still hear the familiar accents of the loving voice of God. May they in this sanctuary feel that they are in their Father's house, and at home. And during this hour give them rest, and joy in believing. And we pray that thou wilt remember all those who are worshiping everywhere to-day, of every name. Wilt thou deliver from their bondage any that are in error. And give more perfect light to those who know but little of the truth. And grant, we pray thee, that wherever the name of Jesus shall be preached to-day, it may be efficacious in the salvation of souls. May the hearts of men be melted under the influence of the Gospel. Grant that men may be sanctified by the truth. Grant that thy people may be more and more strengthened in those ways which shall fit them to promote the interests of thy cause and kingdom.

We pray that this nation may be purified. May our laws, and our civil institutions, and our seminaries of learning, and all the organizations in our land, be pervaded with the spirit of justice and purity and truth and mercy.

And we pray that thou wilt fulfill the promises which thou hast made to the nations of the earth. We pray that thou wilt exalt the valleys, and bring down the high hills; that thou wilt make the rough places smooth, and the crooked places straight. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. The earth suffers and groans yet. War is abroad, and cruelty hath despotic sway, and the nations sigh, and look everywhere for their deliverer. Art not thou, O God of ages! yet the deliverer of mankind? Come forth, we beseech of thee, and let light come with thee, that all ignorance and superstition may flee away, and that all men may know their birth-right, and that they may rise up and find themselves so strong in God that no power shall be able to oppress them.

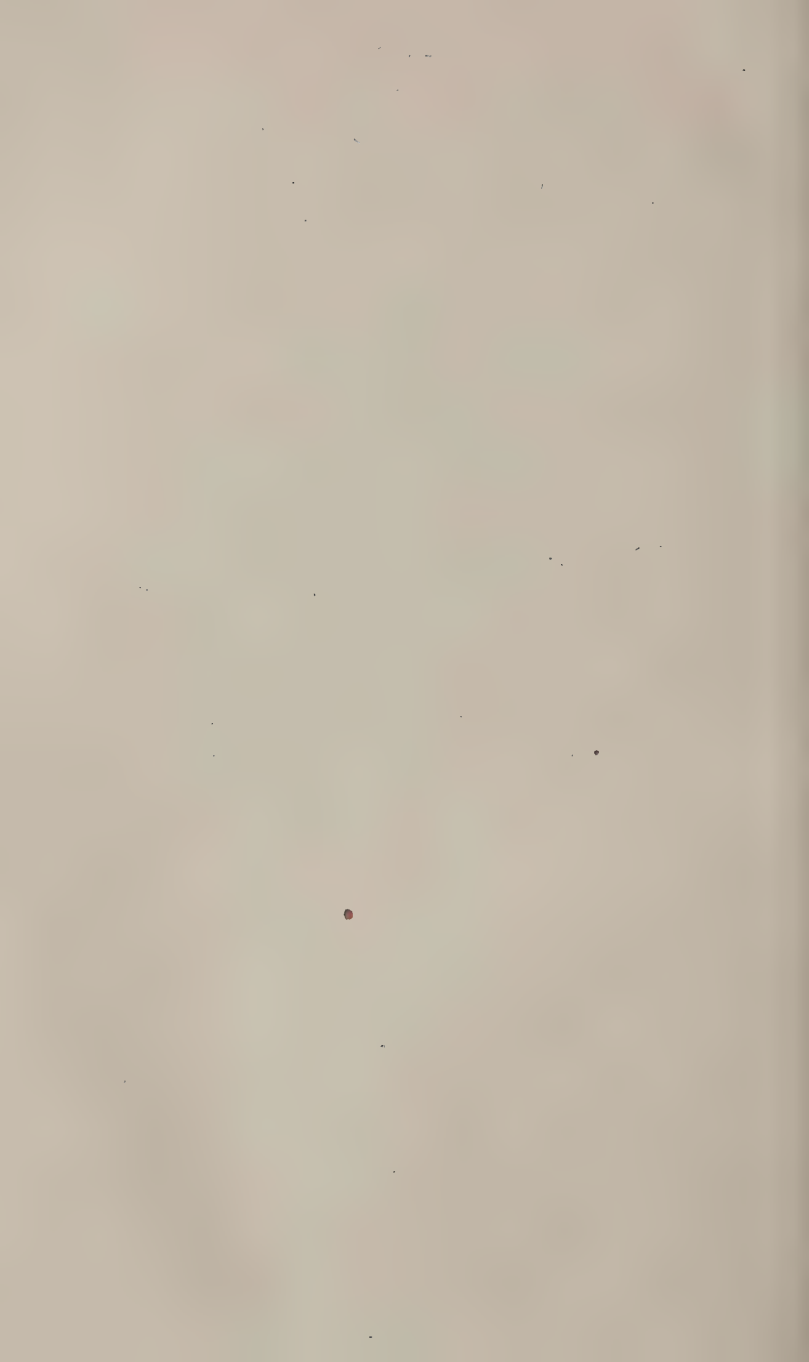
And so may all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And may he reign King of kings and Lord of Lords.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou bless the word spoken this morning. Wilt thou grant that it may take hold of our heart, of our understanding, and of our life. Thou art still the unwearied Governor. Thou art still administering for the universal good. All pains and all penalties are but so many remedies in thy hand. Even so, thou Physician, behold the world as sick, needing both the knife and the draught. Nevertheless, cut short the day; and grant that the bright millennial time may come, when former things shall have passed away, when sorrow and sighing shall be done, and when the new heaven and the new earth in which dwell righteousness shall have come. And to thy name, Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be the praise forevermore. *Amen.*



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